

Scoping Notice

Spring Gathering of Wild Horses Inside and Outside Wild Horse Herd Management Areas

Bureau of Land Management
Rock Springs Field Office

Description of Proposal

In May 1999, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Rock Springs Field Office, released the *Environmental Assessment (EA) for Wild Horse Gathering Inside and Outside Wild Horse Herd Management Areas* and issued the Decision Record in July 1999 allowing for gathering and removal of excess wild horses. BLM has implemented the decision but the decision was specific in that no spring gathering or removal of wild horses from public lands would occur until analyzed in a separate document.

This document serves as notice that the BLM is beginning the environmental analysis process for gathering excess wild horses in the Rock Springs Field Office area (see attached map) during the period of February 15 through March 31. The first priority for gathering and removal operations would be in the area known as “checkerboard” lands (those lands where every other section is privately owned and are located along the Interstate 80 corridor and reach 20 miles north to 20 miles south of the freeway). Proposed spring gathering operations would only take place if weather conditions allow for the safe gathering and removal of excess wild horses (i.e., no or little snow cover, warmer temperatures, etc.) and no wildlife species of concern would be negatively impacted by such operations.

Gathering operations would be in accordance with the Capture Plan (Appendix A) of the Decision Record. The 1999 EA and Decision Record for wild horse gathering in the Rock Springs Field Office may be downloaded from BLM-Wyoming’s website at:

<http://www.wy.blm.gov/currentnews/wildhorses/WILDHORSEADOPTION.HTML#whdocs>

Relationship to Land Use Plans

Gathering and removal of excess wild horses from inside and outside wild horse herd management areas is in conformance with the Green River Resource Management Plan (RMP) approved August 8, 1997. Appropriate management levels for wild horses, and establishment or confirmation of wild horse herd management areas were agreed to with private landowners and wild horse advocacy groups, and were addressed during development of the land use plan.

All wild horses found outside of wild horse herd management areas are considered excess and subject to gathering and removal.

Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Gathering and removal of excess wild horses in the Rock Springs Field Office is subject to the appropriate level of environmental analysis. To comply with NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations which implement NEPA, BLM is required to conduct environmental analysis. This document will serve several purposes:

- I. Provide the public and governmental agencies with information about the potential environmental consequences of the proposed action and alternatives;
- II. Allow the public and agency officials to evaluate and determine the significance of potential environmental consequences of the proposed action and alternatives;
- III. Evaluate practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the proposed action and alternatives; and
- IV. Provide the responsible official with information upon which to make an informed decision.

Land and Resource Management Issues and Concerns

A BLM interdisciplinary team of resource specialists will be involved in the analysis of the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives. Land and resource issues identified thus far include:

Potential impacts to wild horses including mid-to-late stage of pregnancy;
Potential impacts to young foals;
Potential impacts to listed or proposed for listing, candidate, or other sensitive plant and animal species;
Potential impacts to big game, winter ranges, and crucial winter ranges;
Potential impacts to sage grouse, leks, and nesting areas; and
Potential impacts to breeding and nesting raptors.

Public input is important in establishing the level and scope of the analysis. BLM is requesting the public's help in identifying the level of analysis needed, alternatives for analysis, other issues or concerns that should be analyzed, mitigative opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure the completeness of the analysis process. BLM encourages your comments. Your comments are due by October 30, 2000. Please send your comments to:

Address: Teri Deakins, Project Manager
BLM - Rock Springs Field Office
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, WY 82901

Email: rock_springs_wymail@blm.gov
(Please reference Spring Gathering in the subject field)

Initial Mailing List

The scoping notice initial mailing distribution includes, but is not limited to, the following agencies, individuals, industries, organizations, and media:

Government Offices

Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming State Office (910, 912, 920, 930)
Bureau of Land Management, Kemmerer, Rawlins, Pinedale, and White River (CO) Field Offices
Office of the Governor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Wyoming State Clearinghouse
Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
Wyoming Game and Fish Department (Cheyenne, Green River)

Elected and Other Officials

Mayor of Rock Springs

Mayor of Green River

Mayor of Superior

Mayor of Wamsutter

Postmaster, Farson

State Senators: Tex Boggs, Mark Harris, Rae Lynn Job

State Representatives: Kenilynn Zanetti, Fred Parady, Chris Boswell, Bud Nelson, Louise Ryckman

Sweetwater County Commissioners

Sweetwater County Planner

Sweetwater County Libraries, Green River, Rock Springs

Bonnie Cannon, Representative for Congresswoman Barbara Cubin

Lyn Shanaghy, Representative for Senator Mike Enzi

Pati Smith, Representative for Senator Craig Thomas

Public Land Users and User Groups

Affected grazing permittees

Humane Society

Fund for Animals

ISPMB

Animal Protection Institute

Doris Day Animal League

Animal Defense Fund

American Mustang & Burro Association

Taurus Production

IDA

Other Wild Horse Advocacy Groups

Shoshone-Arapahoe Joint Tribal Council

Northern Ute Tribal Council

Shosone-Bannock

Sierra Club, Northern Plains and Wyoming Representatives

Rock Springs Grazing Association

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

National Wildlife Federation

Wyoming Wildlife Federation

Wyoming Outdoor Council

Wyoming Public Lands Council

Wyoming Wool Growers Association

Rock Springs Chamber of Commerce

Green River Chamber of Commerce

Newspapers

Salt Lake City Tribune
Deseret News, Salt Lake City
Casper Star Tribune
Kemmerer Gazette
Uinta County Herald
Sublette County Journal, Pinedale
Rock Springs Rocket Miner
Jackson Hole News
Bridger Valley Pioneer
Little Chicago Review
Pinedale Roundup
Green River Star
Rawlins Daily Times

Radio Stations

National Public Radio, Laramie
Wyoming Radio Network, Cheyenne
K2 Radio Network, Casper
KRKK, KSIT, KQSW Radio, Rock Springs
KEVA Radio, Evanston
KFBC (and family of stations) Cheyenne
KMER Radio, Kemmerer
KMTN Radio, Jackson
KPIN Radio, Pinedale
KUGR, KYCS Radio, Green River

Television Stations

KTWO - Casper

Wire Services

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